

# Canons of the Bible

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# Canon

Canon, greek word meaning “stick used for measuring”, however later used for a standard for things being judged.

- Alexandria grammarians referred to canons as a term for a list of authors worthy of attention.
- Marks Bible as closed, unchangeable set of text because of its religious significance
- Ecclesiastes 12:12: “Of anything beyond there, child beware. Of making many books there is no end”
  - ◆ Suggest that Bible is must sufficient text in religious communities.

# The Hebrew Bible

Scholars don't really know when Hebrew Bible was canonized, but didn't like to associate canon with the Hebrew Bible.

- Theory that a rabbinic council met in Jamnia in 90 CE, voted on some books and the Hebrew Bible became established forever.
- For a while, the Torah and the Pentateuch (Genesis to Deuteronomy) was the Jewish Bible.
- They saw Ezra as the receive the “Law of God” in fifth century BCE as Pentateuch.
- Eventually Jewish community recognized Torah for sixth to fourth century BCE, but no one knew how

The Hebrew Bible was made up of a three part canon: the Torah, Nevi'im (the prophets), and Ketuvim (writings). It is also divided by four parts: Torah, Histories, Poetical, Wisdom books, and prophets, the order also used by Christians.

- The Nevi'im included: Joshua, Judges, Samuel (one book), Kings (one book), “the latter prophets”, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekial, and the minor prophets from Hosea to Malachi (one book).
- The Ketuvim included: Psalms, Proverbs, Job, “the Five Scrolls”, Ruth, Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes, Lamentations, Esther, Daniel, and Ezra-Nehemiah (one book), and Chronicles (one book)
- The Torah was canonized first in the Persian period, the Nevi'im during the late Persian period, and the Ketuvim followed last.

Judaism didn't have a canon in the first millennium CE, different Jewish groups had different Bibles.

- Some used the Qumran and the Masoretic text which differ from each other.
- Twenty text from the Hebrew bible became no longer prominent, “The Book of Wars of the Lord” and “Book of Jasher”.
- The Hebrew Bible was dubbed essential, holy, and authoritative before it was canonized.
- The canonization of the book came from the community views based on its certainty, sacredness, authority, and inspiration.
  - ◆ Song of Solomon was first interpreted as an erotic love poem however they changed it to a love poem between God and Israel.
- After the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE, the Jews became “the People of the Book”

# The Greek Bible

The Christian Bible was in greek, an expansion of the Hebrew Bible, made for the use of greek speaking Jews.

- It was referred to as “the Septuagint” which meant seventy
- It included more historical works such as 1 & 2 Maccabees, and 1 Esdras, the Wisdom of Solomon, the Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sirach, Tobit, Judith, etc.
- It became a collection of text full of translations and revisions

Most Christians couldn't tell the difference between biblical books because most of them were illiterate, however those who weren't, only a few of them could also read greek.

- In the second millennium, the Christian Church expanded and re-ordered the Hebrew Bible.
- The Protestant Reformation churches replaced the Bible's latin text with its original language, it was given more importance.
- Martin Luther's translation included the New Testament and the Old Testament with additional works at the end.
  - ◆ Wanted text to be available for reading and meditation.
- Calvinist reformers didn't see that the translation as acceptable
- The Anglican Church saw the value for reading and studying but not for establishing doctrine.

# The New Testament

At the end of the first century CE, various gospels, narratives, letters, didactic discourses, an apocalyptic text were produced in Christian communities.

- It was used in a public setting made as an authority like Jewish scriptures.
- The status of canonism became more important.

There were four gospels and ten letters accepted by second century CE

- The readings: Acts, Hebrews, Revelations, 2 & 3 John, Jude, and 2 Peter were not accepted into the Bible this early.



Apostolic authorship arguments challenged the Christian communities

- Valentinus and Gnostics believed the Jewish God was ignorant and their scriptures mislead naive believers.
- Gnostic produced text that reveals secret apostolic teachings.
- Marcion believe the Old Testament Go was not the Father of Jesus
  - ◆ He believed the New Testament showed evidence of a difference between law and gospel.
- Eventually Gnostic and Marcion followers affirmed the unity of the Old and New Testaments.
- Tertullian believed that the scriptures were “Books of God” in Christian worship, and there was no difference between Jewish and Christian writings.

Christian text contributed to the emergence of canon.

- Early Christians used codex formats to fit more text than the scrolls were able to.
  - ◆ Codex format: a bound volume of pages similar to present day book.
- First and Second century Christians believed the Christian bible had a different authority than the Torah and prophets.

Athanasius' includes 27 text in the New Testament but remove Revelations and 2 & 3 John because it made the apostle fathers seem authoritative.

# Textual Criticism

There are no original copies of the Hebrew Bible or Greek Bible.

- Numerous and partial copies have been reserved
- There are multiple manuscripts were printed by hand, which made them all different.

Scholars created “textual criticism” which allows a way to analyze text through critical comparison of its different copies.

# Sources

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